

# Moosic Mountain Trees

On 10-25-2009 the LVC-LRCA and the Dunmore Historical Society hosted a hike on the Moosic Mountain above Dunmore to tour the area through which passed the Pennsylvania Coal Company's Gravity Railroad in the nineteenth century. In the course of that walk, S. R. Powell picked up various leaves to document the various species of trees now growing on the mountain. One of those leaves was an American Chestnut leaf.

At his talk/presentation at the Lackawanna Historical Society on November 8, 2009 on the Pennsylvania Coal Company's Gravity Railroad, Salvatore Mecca showed the group a small bag of American chestnuts that he and his wife picked up on the Moosic Mountain above Dunmore. Following that talk/presentation, S. R. Powell said to Salvatore Mecca that he (SRP) would like to go back up on the mountain and have a look at whatever American Chestnut trees could be located.

On 11-15-09, Sal and Mary Ann Mecca and S. R. Powell hiked up the mountain above Dunmore and located many dozens of American Chestnut trees—most of which are in the 15-20-foot range in height, with trunks a couple of inches in diameter. Many of those living specimens of American Chestnut are found in close proximity to blighted specimens of the same size. (The bark-shattering blight usually girdles the trees near their bases.)

On the "level" between the head of No. 11 plane (and before the tunnel) they located several American Chestnut trees that are no less than eight or nine inches in diameter and easily 50 feet high—and very healthy. Perhaps these larger trees have gotten beyond the danger of the blight (a fungus bark disease, believed to be of Asiatic origin) that kills many of the smaller American Chestnut trees? In any event, the Meccas and Powell picked up many American Chestnut leaves, as well other leaves, in the course of their walk on November 15, 2009. Representative specimens from among all those leaves are shown hereafter—scanned from the original leaves by SRP.

The Meccas and Powell also came upon at least a dozen Canadian Hemlock trees, in a deep ravine, with trunks no less than 3 feet in diameter and easily 80-90 feet high, the trunks being straight as an arrow, with no side branches or blemishes. Those Hemlock trees could easily be 100 years old, or older. Neither the Meccas nor Powell had ever seen larger Hemlocks anywhere.

Shown hereafter are representative specimens of leaves, from the Moosic Mountain above Dunmore, from the following species of trees: American Chestnut, Chestnut Oak, Black Oak, Red Oak, Mossycup (Bur) Oak, Sassafras, and Beech.

**American Chestnut, *Castanea Borkh.***

Leaves 4-8", long in relation to width, with large prominent teeth on edges; bristle at the end of each tooth curves upwards. Base of leaf blade tapers sharply; leaf is very thin and papery.



**Chestnut Oak, *Quercus prinus* L.**

7-16 pairs of rounded teeth; leaves, 4-9", somewhat leathery



**Black Oak, *Quercus velutina* Lam.**

Leaves 4-10", moderately lobed, usually somewhat hairy beneath, somewhat thickened and generally glossy above





**Red Oak, *Quercus rubra* L.**

Leaves 4-10", similar to Black Oak, but leaves hairless, thin, and dull above



**Mossycup (Bur) Oak, *Quercus macrocarpa* Michx.**

Leaves 4-10", usually with 1 deep pair of indentations which divide leaves into 2 or more portions





**Sassafras**, *Sassafras albidum* Nees

Leaves 2-9", untoothed, lobed, or not, in 3 patterns (3 fingers, a thumb and mitten outline, or smooth egg-shaped)



**Beech, *Fagus grandifolia* Ehrh.**

Leaves, 1-5", elliptic or egg-shaped, coarse-toothed

